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## Social Problems and Reforms

*Criminality and Economic Conditions.* By WILLIAM ADRIAN BONGER. Translated by HENRY P. HORTON. The Modern Criminal Science Series, published under the auspices of the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology. (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company. 1916. Pp. xxxi, 706. \$5.50.)

The author of this volume is one of the founders of the International Union of Penal Law and is perhaps the most eminent of Dutch criminologists.

In one sentence the book may be characterized as a statement of the socialist's basis of criminology and his refutation of Lombroso's theory of "the born criminal." It has, however, an interest for a much larger circle than is included by the designation of socialists, for Dr. Bonger has gathered much valuable material, all of which he presents so fairly that even those who would question the validity of his reasoning and his philosophy will find the book an aid to clear thinking.

More than one third of its 700 pages are devoted to summaries and criticisms of the literature dealing with the relation between criminality and economic conditions from the time of Thomas More to the present day. It is interesting to note that Robert Owen, one of the precursors of modern criminal science, in 1844 gave expression to views that, in general, accord with Dr. Bonger's conclusions, and which he sums up as follows: "It is not the man himself, it is his circumstances that form his character. An unfavorable environment produces a bad man, a favorable one, a good man, but the organization of the society of today is such that it awakens in a man all evil qualities."

Dr. Bonger presents interesting testimony of the statisticians who showed that with an increase in the price of grain there came a corresponding increase in the number of crimes against property together with a general decrease in the number of crimes against morals and against the person. While he does not impeach the validity of this reasoning, he warns against considering this European experience of the middle of the last century as a law of nature. Quite naturally he devotes considerable attention to the analysis and criticism of the doctrines of Lombroso, Ferri, and other members of the Italian school of criminology. His informing criticism of Ferri's anthropological, cosmic, and social factors brings the reader to a much better understanding of the content of the expression "economic conditions."

In the second part of the book the author devotes himself to a presentation of the present economic system and its consequences, and by abundant statistics he endeavors to show that the capitalist scheme of production is the cause of the crime which the weaknesses of the individual lead him to commit. While his study of the relationship of the economic conditions to crimes against property is enlightening and convincing, he is not so successful when he comes to show this same relationship in sex crimes and other crimes against the person.

In a short chapter covering ten pages near the end of the book he deals with the individual factor in crime, which in his social philosophy is clearly recognized in pathological crimes only. The number of criminals who are qualitatively different from the general group he deems almost negligibly small; but Dr. Spalding found in the examination of 400 women offenders at the Massachusetts Reformatory for Women that there were 37 per cent of abnormal mental cases. Likewise in a detailed examination of the first 300 cases in the Massachusetts Reformatory (for men) Drs. Stearns and Rossy found 22 per cent were feeble-minded, 9.6 per cent border-line cases, and 3.3 per cent probably psychotic. The highest percentage of the feeble-minded was found among prisoners guilty of sex offenses and the lowest among prisoners guilty of crimes against property, while the percentage of those who were probably psychotic subjects was highest among prisoners guilty of crimes against life. Dr. Healy throws additional light on this subject in his investigation of 1,000 young recidivists among whom he found 247 who were either morons, imbeciles, or were suffering from subnormal mentality or psychosis.

The individual case analyses that are being made by Drs. Healy, Guy Fernald, Spalding, and others are throwing light upon this individual element which Dr. Bonger considers either secondary or negligible in amount, but which they are finding too large in volume to dispose of in this way. In the normal man economic conditions provide the best explanation why crimes are committed but these recent researches would go to show that in about 25 per cent of the cases the criminal is physically or mentally predisposed to crime and the number may prove to be larger.

To Dr. Bonger's statement that "to be a good criminologist it is necessary to be a statistician but it is necessary to be a sociologist also" must now be added that he must likewise be a psychologist.

C. C. CARSTENS.